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Harold,
I thought I'd go over again this issue of which groups can participate in e-biomed. We would like to avoid the situation of deciding for each journal/editorial board on the merits and instead have some general criteria. These criteria should be fairly simple and inclusive yet still eliminate most fringe contributors. Vitek had proposed that any journal currently indexed by one of the major abstracting&indexing services be included. Thus journals indexed by MEDLINE, EMBASE, BIOSIS, and Current Contents would be included. I would guess that this adds up to 6,000 - 10,000 different titles. To allow for new journals/editorial boards, another criteria could be that the journal's board must have e.g. 3 members who are currently NIH,DOE,NSF,Hughes,EMBO,MRC,Wellcome, etc.(essentially all major funding agencies). principle investigators. That would include many thousands of scientists thus it would be quite inclusive but also eliminate most fringe contributors.

Now originally we'd been thinking that these groups would be doing peer review and the submissions would thus be peer-reviewed articles. However, prompted by Vitek's interest in having a preprint server (HighWire, BMJ, Lancet plan to as well), I realized that we should use this same approach to deal with the problem of screening preprint submissions. That is, that approved groups could submit peer-reviewed articles and/or screened articles. This would be the simplest way to keep NIH out of the role of gatekeeper and be much easier to manage than having authors directly get approval from e.g. 2 NIH PIs and then we'd have to validate this somehow. We could set up an infrastructure to greatly simplify the job of setting up a preprint screening procedure.

For example, suppose that Pat Brown wanted to set up a preprint service for expression analysis. He might get together with several colleagues and register as an editorial board with e-biomed. Their service would then be listed on e-biomed and a scientist could choose to submit their preprint to Pat's service. Pat and colleagues would get e-mailed this preprint (through some software system we develop) and then decide whether it's OK or not (they might set up an e-mail alias just for this and take turns screening the preprints). If a preprint was OK, they'd simply e-mail a particular address or check something off on our system and the preprint would then appear - labelled as screened by Pat's service. It might be more prestigious somehow to appear with one label versus another in the service. Certainly aspects about domain would be clearer this way. Note that EMBO proposed much more than a simple screen - they want to check whether the experiments have been done appropriately etc.. Thus the meaning of preprint could vary just as the meaning of peer-review varies. This diversity could

be a bit confusing but it also might be important.

One thing that would be important is how to deal with groups that provide us outrageous material. Whatever criteria we come up with, we may find that some group is sending us peer-reviewed or screened papers that are inappropriate. This is where an advisory board would be quite useful - to review the evidence and make a decision. Initially, we must reserve the right to do this but it's much better to have an external board do it.

Another issue where an advisory board will be important is to decide which international groups we work with to set up mirror sites and alternative submission sites. The former is a more near-term problem. Again, an advisory board would be helpful here though it seems you've already committed to EBI in Europe. We will discuss the technical issues here and come up with technical approaches but inevitably there will be politics with this issue.